



Visitors motivations and loyalty towards the Umtiza arts festival

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Abstract

The enormous artistic talent that South Africa is endowed with, is evident in the over 300 annual festivals that reverberate around the country. However, it is evident that with the increasing number of festivals, competition for attendees, resources and income is getting tighter. Visitors to festivals justify the reason-for-being of the event, but more importantly, income that is crucial to the sustainability of the event. Understanding the motivations of visitors to a festival, places the organisers at a vantage point in order to increase visitor satisfaction and hopefully expand the event loyal-client base. The goal of this study was to explore the motivations and loyalty of attendees at the Umtiza arts festival. A quantitative research paradigm was employed through the use of a questionnaire as the study instrument. Duly completed questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The key finding of the study is that the main motivation among the respondents is to relax and socialise. The major implication from the study is the suggestion for organisers of the Umtiza festival to exercise a strategic shift in marketing and product development.

Keywords: motivation, visitors, festival, Umtiza arts festival, loyalty, Eastern Cape.

Introduction

Festivals are increasingly being adopted as a policy and strategic option to boost the product offering of tourism destinations (Diederling & Kwiatkowski, 2015, Murphy, Mascardo, & Benckendorff, 2007). It has been argued that in an increasingly globalised world where tourism products are becoming more homogenous (Getz & Page, 2016; Connell, Page, & Meyer, 2015), festival tourism presents a great opportunity for tourism practitioners to enhance their destination identity (Mxunyelwa & Tshetu, 2018) and diversify their product offering (Ford & Peeper, 2007; Ashworth & Page, 2011). Similarly, Botha, Viviers and Slabbert, (2012) uphold that the popularity of events can also be attributed to the important cultural, social and economic roles that they perform in communities. The growing spectrum of festival tourism has equally fuelled research interest into the impacts, management and sustainability of this important tourism niche.

There is no gainsaying that the exponential growth in festival tourism has in the same breath intensified competition within the sector as festival enthusiast have a wide range of options



available to them. In fact, Botha, Viviers and Slabbert, (2012) allude to more than 300 annual festivals in South Africa. For festival organisers, the continuous increase in the number of festivals heightens the level of competition and increases the degree of pressure to deliver better products and services at every event. More importantly, it increases the need to understand the motivations behind customers/attendees choosing their festival among the plethora of festivals. The current study traces its roots to the inherent and added advantage festival organisers would have by grasping the reasons why attendees heeded the call to participate at their festival. This is done by exploring the motivations and loyalty of visitors to the annual Umtiza arts festival in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM) in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa.

The Umtiza festival gets its name from the Umtiza tree found in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Launched four years ago, the Umtiza festival is jointly hosted by the East London Guild theatre, the East London museum and the Ann Bryant Art gallery. These three institutions are symbolised by the three stems of the Umtiza tree planted in the East London museum garden in 1960 and has now attained full maturity. The goal of the Umtiza arts festival is to showcase the artistic talent in the Eastern Cape province.

Cognisant of the fact that the *raison d'être* of any festival would be to satisfy the expectations of its audience, it is evident that this study could significantly influence the extent to which organisers of the Umtiza arts festival strive to meet the expectations of the attendees. Moreover, income from ticket sales constitute the greatest source of revenue for most festivals (Kruger, 2009 cited in Botha, Viviers & Slabbert, 2012).

Literature review

Motivations in tourism

Tourism literature has long identified motivations as a significant variable that arouses, drives and guides tourists' behaviour (Han & Hyun, 2018, Caber & Albayrak, 2016; Mak et al., 2009). Early works by researchers such as Crompton (1979) and Dann (1981) sought to bring clarity on the reasons why people take tourism trips. However, after decades of inquiry, researchers are still to arrive at responses that are deemed satisfactory by all. In fact, the emergence of tourism phenomena such as dark tourism (Isaac, Nawijn, Van Liempt, & Gridnevskiy, 2019; Dunkley, Morgan, & Westwood, 2011) and voluntourism (Knollenberg, McGehee, Bynum, & Clemmons, 2014) have rather prompted further research interests on the subject of tourists' motivations.

George (2004), March and Woodside (2005) and Caber and Albayrak (2016) highlight the importance of exploring and grasping individual motivations as they reveal the inner state and basic desires of the person. Furthermore, motivations serve as fuel that propels human energy in a given direction and can therefore be instrumental in the assessment of predictive behaviour (Decrop, 2006; George, 2004). Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of needs has frequently been used to explain the underlining influences on motivation. It has been explained that Maslow's five levels of human needs (physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem and self-actualisation) provide insight into travel motivations (Tikkkanen, 2007). In line with this approach, Crompton, 1979) arrives at seven psychological factors which motivate tourists to initiate tourism trips, namely: escape from everyday routine, discovery and evaluation of oneself, relaxing or participation in recreational activities, gaining a certain level of prestige, regression purposes, strengthening family bonds and facilitating social interactions. Similarly, Lee et al, (2017) assert that tourism motivations are merely a reflection of the mental state which prompts the individual to act in a preconceived manner in a bout to satisfy specific tourism urges. Lee et al. (2017) explain that such internal stimuli create needs/wants which arouse psychological tension within the individual. Hence, Hsu et al. (2017) suggest that the stimulation of travel needs in tourists constitutes travel motivations which trigger actions from travellers to fulfil such travel needs in order to cause the inherent



tensions to subside. In this regard, Crompton (1979) and Lee et al, (2017) conclude that the travel decision-making process in the individual follows the process of decision-choice, encode, process and memorise information in a way that is consistent with the initial travel motivations.

Customer Loyalty

The concept of customer loyalty has been defined as the persistent commitment from a customer to patronise a product or service now and in the future despite alternatives being offered by competitors (TaghiPourian & Bakhsh, 2015; Brida, Fasone, Scuderi, Zapata-Aguirre, 2014; Chua & Han, 2017). With reference to festival tourism in South Africa, customer loyalty would refer to a festival attendee repeatedly and consistently attending a particular festival irrespective of there being over 300 annual festivals in the country.

Brunner, Stocklin, and Opwis (2008), Lee et al, (2017) and Korte (1995), assert that loyal customers avail a number of advantages to an organisation, notably a reduction in the expenses incurred on marketing and a reliable cash flow. Extant research has established that the effort and costs involved in lobbying and acquiring new customers is often more than that required to keep repeat or returning customers (Chua et al, 2017; Han Hwang & Lee, 2016; Shim, Kang, Kim, and Hyun, 2017, Mechinda, Serirat, PoPaijit, Lertwannawit & Anuwichanont, 2010). Considering the increasing level of competition among festival organisers in South Africa, there is no gainsaying that loyal visitors to any festival will be greatly appreciated by the organisers. Furthermore, studies have revealed that visitor motivations and customer satisfaction are important constructs in determining customer retention and loyalty (Brunner et al, 2008; Han et al, 2016; Shim et al, 2017).

Methodology

The quantitative research paradigm was employed in exploring visitors' motivation and loyalty towards the Umtiza arts festival. The rationale for this approach was to get the views of as many Umtiza festival attendees as possible.

The Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire used in this study was arrived at based on a review of previous research on travel motivations (Park, Musa, Moghavvemi, Thirumoorthi, Taha, Mohtar, and Sarker, 2019; Han & Hyun, 2018; Zhang & Peng, 2014; Vuuren & Slabbert, 2012), subject experts' input and a final review with further comments from organisers of the Umtiza arts festival. Following this extensive process, eleven (11) items were retained to capture visitors' motivations for attending the festival. Furthermore, organisers of the festival provided valuable information on the different platforms on which the event had been marketed. On the whole, the questionnaire was made up of four sections detailing demographic information (section A), travel behaviour (section B), motivations for attending the Umtiza arts festival (section C) and loyalty towards the Umtiza arts festival (section D).

Data collection

The questionnaire was distributed among attendees of the Umtiza arts festival during the three days (31 May to 2nd June 2019) of the event. Five field workers were deployed throughout the venue with instructions to approach all attendees and ask if they would be willing to participate in the study. Visitors who accepted the invitation to take part in the study were then handed the questionnaire to complete. Out of the 150 questionnaires returned, 130 were duly completed and deemed usable. The rest (20 questionnaires) were invalidated due to the fact that they were only partially completed.



Results and discussion

Profile of festival respondents

It is evident from table 1 that the youth (30.8%) and young adults (20.8%) constituted the majority among the respondents. Female respondents (61.5%) formed a significant majority among the respondents. Most of the respondents were professionals (30%) with careers in academics, banking, accounting and the medical field. It is also interesting to note that students constituted a significant portion (22.3%) of the respondents. Equally worthy of note from the demographic statistics is the fact that most of the respondents (89.2%) were from the Eastern Cape province.

Table 1. Basic profile of attendees at the Umtiza annual arts festival who took part in this study

Characteristics	Key findings
Gender	61.5% female ; 38.5% male
Age	18-20 years – 11.5%; 21-30 years – 30.8% ; 31-40years – 20.8%; 41-50 years – 12.3%; 51-60 years – 11.5%; 60+ years – 13.1% = 100%
Occupation	Professionals – 30% ; administrative officials – 9.2%; artists - 11.5%; self-employed – 13.1%; students – 22.3%; pensioners – 11.5%; unemployed – 2.4% = 100%
Origin	Eastern Cape province – 89.2% ; Mpumalanga province – 4.6%; rest of South Africa – 6.2%.

Source: Author's own compilation

Factors motivating visitors to attend the Umtiza arts festival

Egresi and Kara (2014) assert that maintaining visitor satisfaction and meeting the expectations of attendees is key to establishing a culture of repeat visits among festival attendees. It goes without saying that an unfiltered understanding of visitor motivation in demanding a service or product is the premise of attempting to meet such desires (Egresi & Kara, 2014). The task of meeting visitor aspirations and desires at festivals is made even more challenging by the fact that visitor motivations are diverse. Table 2 reveals the motivations among the respondents of attending the Umtiza annual arts festival.

Table 2. Respondents' motivations for attending the Umtiza arts festival

Motivating factors for attending the Umtiza arts festival	Mean	Std. Deviation
To relax	3.63	1.195
Be with someone special	2.95	1.491
Support art	3.78	1.183
Explore new activities	3.59	1.112
Meet new people	3.38	1.183
Spend time with friends	3.42	1.133
Experience different cultures and lifestyle	3.67	.999
Have fun	3.89	1.051
Enjoy art	3.86	.994
Be together as a family	2.91	1.383
Spend quality time with children	2.51	1.531

Source: Author's own compilation

From the descriptive analysis presented in table 2, it is evident that the top five motivations among the respondents for attending the Umtiza annual arts festival are: to have fun (3.89), enjoy art (3.86), support works of art (3.78), experience different cultures and lifestyles (3.67) and to relax (3.63). These findings on motivations for the respondents attending the Umtiza arts festival tend to correspond with those of Nyikana and Tichaawa, (2018) and Getz, (2008) who found that from a general perspective, visitors to events such as festival are motivated by reasons such as entertainment, socialising, learning, doing something new.



Exploratory statistics based on respondents' motivations for attending the Umtiza arts festival

In order to get greater insight and explore for any underlying patterns of motivations for visitors to the Umtiza annual arts festival, an exploratory factor analysis was performed. However, as a prerequisite to ascertain the suitability of the data set for the principal component analysis (data reduction procedure), a correlation matrix for the motivational data, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett test of Sphericity were assessed. The reason for conducting the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was to examine whether the relational aspects of the variables were strong enough to proceed with a factor analysis. The results obtained (table 3), reveal a KMO measure of .791, well-above the recommended minimum of .6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974). Similarly, the Bartlett test of Sphericity proved significant at a value of $P = .000$. These results illustrated that the data reduction by principal component analysis would be appropriate.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.791
Approx. Chi-Square		509.580
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	55
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author's compilation

Having validated the data for factor analysis, the Direct Oblimin rotation method was employed in subjecting the data to factor analysis due to the emergence of visible correlations between the items (table 4). This was done to identify the underlying dimensions of the respondents' motivation for attending the annual Umtiza arts festival. Using an eigenvalue of 1.0 as the factor extraction criterion and loading of 0.30 and above for item inclusion, three factors emerged as the pull factors or motivational elements for the respondents attending the Umtiza annual arts festival.

Table 4. Component Matrix for visitor-motivations for attending the Umtiza Arts festival

Source: Author's own compilation

Component	1	2	3
1	1.000	.223	.407
2	.223	1.000	.196
3	.407	.196	1.000

These three factors accounted for 63.3% of total variance and were labelled according to the similarity of their characteristics as follows: novelty and support for the arts (Factor 1), family togetherness (Factor 2) and relaxation and socialisation (Factor 3). All Cronbach Alpha values loaded above 0.5 (refer to table 5).

Table 5. Factor analysis of respondents' motivations for attending the Umtiza arts festival

Factor label	Factor 1. Novelty and support for art	Factor 2. Family togetherness	Factor 3. Relaxation and socialisation
Explore new activities	.843		
Meet people with similar interests	.824		
Show my support for art	.762		
Spend quality time with my children		.905	
Be together as a family		.854	
Spend time with someone special		.659	
To relax			.761
To have fun			.755
Be together as friends			.587
Experience a different culture and lifestyle			.515
To enjoy works of art			.504
Mean Value	3.58	2.79	3.69

Source: Author's own compilation

The scree plot (figure 1) and the correlation matrix for visitor-motivations for attending the Umtiza arts festival (table 4), there is ample evidence to uphold the three distinction between the three factors accounting for visitor-motivations for attending the Umtiza arts festival. This is because the scree plot exhibits a significant break on the third factor and also because the correlation matrix in table 5 shows low similarity between the factors. Hence, supporting the view that they are distinct factors measuring different components of the respondents' motivations for attending the Umtiza arts festival.

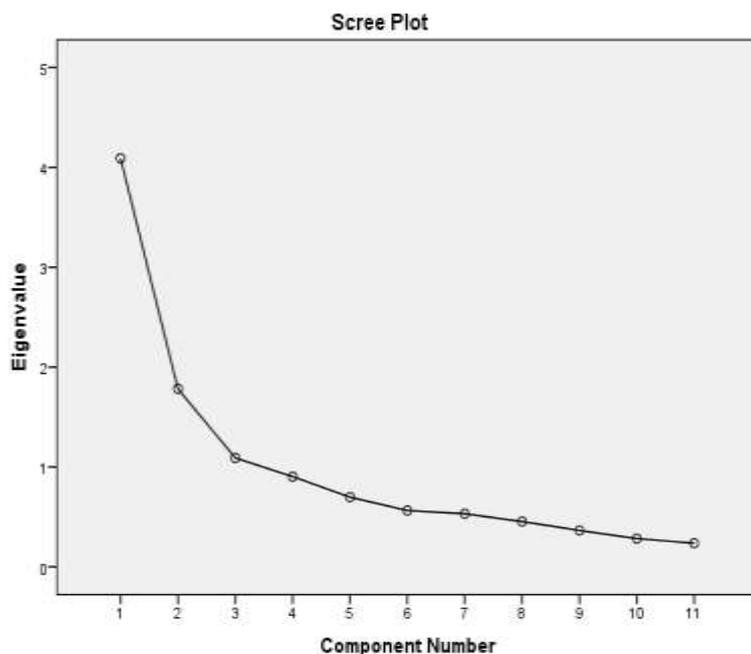


Figure 1. Scree plot for visitor-motivations for attending the Umtiza arts festival

The reliability of the data and measure of internal consistency among the items was verified using the Cronbach alpha coefficient (table 5). This revealed a value of .82 indicating good internal consistency reliability, considering that scores of .7 are acceptable and .8 preferable (Pallant, 2013).

Table 5. Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
.816	.826	11

Source: Author's own compilation

Considering that the Umtiza arts festival is an annual event, this study further sought to assess the loyalty of the respondents to the festival. In this regard, the respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 meaning very unlikely and 5 meaning very likely) the likelihood that they would; a) attend the Umtiza arts festival next year, b) recommend the festival to a friend, and c) recommend East London as a holiday destination to a friend or relative. Based on the high mean scores obtained from the descriptive statistics (table 6), the probability of return visits among the respondents is quite high.

Table 6. Respondents loyalty towards the Umtiza arts festival

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Likelihood of attending the Umtiza arts festival Next year	4.20	.857
Likelihood of recommending the Umtiza arts festival to a friend or relative	4.25	.808
Likelihood of recommending East London as a holiday destination	4.26	.763
Valid N (listwise)		

Source: Author's compilation



The following inferences or findings emanate from the foregoing analysis:

The relaxation and socialisation motivation seem more prevalent with the respondents as evidenced from the mean score of 3.69. This finding is closely in line with previous studies (Zhang & Peng, 2014; Van der Merwe, Slabbert & Saayman, 2011; Saayman & Van der Merwe, 2007; Swanson & Horridge, 2006) who found that relaxation and escape are common motivations in travel for events, leisure and nature tourism. Considering that the Umtiza festival is a form of event tourism, it is interesting to find that relaxation and socialisation rank quite highly compared with “family togetherness” with a mean of 2.79.

The second notable finding in this study is that the Umtiza arts festival still has some ground to cover in order to compete as a national festival. This is evident in the fact that most of its attendees (89.2%) come from the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The local nature of the festival can probably be attributed to its youthful nature as the Umtiza festival is only four years old. On the other hand, this can be seen as an opportunity for growth.

Thirdly, the demographic dichotomy in this study can hardly be over-looked due to the significant female participation edge over males (62.5% - 38.5%). While the finding of higher female participation in event tourism is aligned with previous findings (Van der Merwe, Slabbert and Saayman, (2011), it is in stark contrast to other studies (Park, Musa, Moghavvemi, Thirumoorhi, Taha, Mohtar, & Sarker, 2019; Zhang & Peng, (2014) which registered higher male representation.

The fourth finding that is worth noting from this study is the high mean (4.20) of the respondents who intend to return to the Umtiza arts festival next year. This is important because as Fang, Tang, Li and Wu, (2018) put it, visitors’ loyalty intention or intention for repeat visits is a positive indicator for the successful development of tourism. This finding has even greater significance considering that the mean value for respondents who are willing to recommend participation at the Umtiza arts festival to friends and family is higher (4.25).

Implications

The results and findings from this study on visitors’ motivation and loyalty towards the Umtiza arts festival provide sufficient ground for the following implications to be drawn:

The results provide the marketing and promotion team of the Umtiza arts festival with clear indicators of pull factors for attendees at the event. Based on these findings, there is unambiguous information on what is working reasonably well and areas that require attention going forward. This could imply a shift in marketing strategy in order to broaden the visitor-base or volume of attendees. Furthermore, the results and findings of this study have direct implications on efforts to accentuate customer satisfaction at the Umtiza arts festival. Having reliable and measurable information on attendee motivations for participating at an event should evidently provide reasonable grounds for action to be taken in order to satisfy the indicated expectations. Therefore, this study avails management of the Umtiza arts festival with avenue for positive actions that could be taken to improve customer satisfaction next year. Finally, this study has implications on the product offering of the Umtiza arts festival. The fact that the “family togetherness” factor has the lowest mean (2.79), implies that the product offering of the festival requires action to pull this important market segment. The urgency of addressing this factor is further strengthened by the fact that the Umtiza arts festival is still largely local (89.2%), hence the family appeal has the potential to enhance the development of the event.

Conclusions

This study set out to determine the motivations and loyalty of visitors to the Umtiza arts festival. It has subsequently been established that three underlying factors (novelty and support for art, family togetherness and relaxation and socialisation) push respondents to attend the



festival. There is reasonable consistency between this study and previous studies on visitor motivation to events in general. Based on the results and findings of this study it is plausible to conclude that the Umtiza arts festival has a potential growth trajectory as there is high incidence of respondents demonstrating the intention to return to the festival next year and equally recommend participation at the festival to friends and relatives. However, in order to sustain the positive growth path organisers of the Umtiza arts festival take actions make the festival more attractive to families and expand the scope of the event to the national level.

It is worth noting that this study experienced a limitation in terms of the low response rate from visitors to the Umtiza arts festival. Some visitors arrived quite close to the starting time of the show they were there to watch, hence the excuse that they did not have enough time to complete the questionnaire. The low response rate means that there is limited scope for generalising the findings of the study.

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